

## Frequently Asked Questions to the FY 2010 Funding Opportunity

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ) related to the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Science Collaborative's FY 2010 Funding Opportunity. This FAQ is NOT an amendment to the request for proposals (RFP) that was released on January 29, 2010 and can be found at <http://nerrs.noaa.gov/RCDefault.aspx?ID=612>. You may ask questions about this RFP by sending an email to one of our funding program managers: [kalle.matso@unh.edu](mailto:kalle.matso@unh.edu) or [justine.stadler@unh.edu](mailto:justine.stadler@unh.edu). Or, you can join an informational teleconference on March 31 (10 AM or 2 PM EST) or April 1 (10 AM or 2 PM EST). If you are interested in participating in a teleconference, please send an email to [cindy.tufts@unh.edu](mailto:cindy.tufts@unh.edu).

### Funding

***Q: How will projects be funded?***

Funds will be awarded by the University of New Hampshire (UNH) to the institute, agency, or friends group represented by the Principal Investigator (PI). UNH prefers to issue one contract and have the PI organization subcontract if necessary. Proposed budgets must use the federally negotiated indirect cost rate of their PI's institution. No matching funds are required. Notification of funding will be in early August 2010; funding will begin September 1, 2010.

***Q: Can organizations that subcontract for federal agencies receive funding?***

Yes, contractors to federal agencies are eligible for funding. However, federal agencies and the FTEs they employ cannot be compensated in any way through this program.

***Q: For multiple-year projects, will funding be all or nothing?***

This will depend on the proposal review process. The technical panel may recommend full funding, curtailing the project after one or two years, or not to fund.

***Q: Is there a mechanism for adding something into a project that you didn't budget for in your proposal?***

As with all research, things may not go as planned—and budgets may have to be adjusted—in projects funded by the Science Collaborative. PIs seeking to adjust their budgets should contact the Science Collaborative, which will make decisions to approve or deny such requests on a case-by-case basis.

### Letter of Intent Submission

***Q: Is a Letter of Intent required to submit a full proposal?*** Yes, only applicants who submit a Letter of Intent will be allowed to submit a full proposal. The purpose of the Letter of Intent is to give the Science Collaborative a chance to let you know whether or not you're on the right track.

***Q: If we use citations in the Letter of Intent, is the "literature cited" list considered part of the three-page narrative?*** You may include a "Literature Cited" section, and it will not be counted as part of your three-page narrative.

***Q: Are we locked into Letter of Intent budgets?***

Budgets can change between your Letter of Intent and Full Proposal. However, Letters of Intent should reflect the applicants best estimate of what true project costs will be.

### Narrative Preparation (Letter of Intent & Full Proposal)

***Q: Our problem may not be an issue for communities geographically co-located with our Reserve, but it is an issue for our state. Does this fit the requirements?***

The problem you describe must be one at the Reserve and the communities it serves. It is up to you to justify your definition of a "local community."

***Q: Will a proposal be rated higher if it's related to climate change?***

Proposals will be reviewed using the funding program goals on page 3 of the Request for Proposals and Application Guide and the review criteria on pages 14 and 15. You may take climate change factors into account, as appropriate.

***Q: My restoration project is focused on early stage research and I do not anticipate on the ground implementation of the results in only three years. Is this acceptable?***

Yes, we do not expect all projects to span the research to application spectrum in three years. However, you must make your case that there is a need for the information the project generates and that it will be used by your identified intended users in decision-making related to the coastal management issue you describe.

*Q: Would members of the scientific community qualify as intended users on a project?*

We do not have a particular set of intended users in mind for any proposal. Applicants must make a case for their choice of intended users and how they anticipate that the organizations represented by the intended user(s) will apply the results of the project.

*Q: Can you tell me more about “project objectives” and how they relate to objectives in traditional science RFPs?* This RFP asks that you address coastal management problems by generating new information and taking specific measures to integrate participant perspectives into that process. Your “objectives” will be those accomplishments that are most essential to addressing the described problem.

*Q: Can you explain what you are looking for in the “Connecting findings to intended user decisions” part of the Methods sections?*

At the beginning of a research project, scientists and intended users of project results have certain assumptions about the findings they will generate and how these findings will relate to management decisions. However, when findings actually come in, it is often the case that the assumptions upon which the project was designed are called into question. Combined with uncertainty in the data, this often leads to a need to reassess the connection between these findings and management decisions. Having a plan for this process increases the likelihood that the results of your work will be used.

*Q: Does the PI need to be separate from the Integration Lead?*

No. The Integration Lead can be the PI. However, it's recommended the Integration Lead not be a researcher or intended user of project results.

*Q: Is the Integration Lead a mediator? Can there be different Integration Leads?*

Mediation is a possible function, and this could be provided by the Integration Lead, or it could be contracted out to a specialist. The most critical role for the Integration Lead is to be responsible for the overall plan for integrating the perspectives of all the participants. Whether the Integration Lead also gets involved in nuts and bolts (e.g., mediation, facilitation) will depend on the project and the background of the particular Integration Lead. If the applicants want to designate two Integration Leads to share the responsibility of balancing project participant perspectives, that is their prerogative.

*Q: Is there an expectation that a NERRS CTP will serve as the Integration Lead?*

No. It is up to applicants to justify that the person they choose has the skills and experience to effectively fill the role.

*Q: Can other investigators be added to the project later?*

Anyone critical to the project must be listed as an investigator with an associated résumé or curriculum vitae in the full proposal for reviewers to be able to evaluate and determine if that project is likely to succeed.

*Q: Does there need to be a letter of commitment from the Reserve manager if the manager is the PI?*

Yes.

## Full Proposal Review

*Q: How will the experts reviewing the proposals be chosen?*

The Science Collaborative maintains a database with information on the professional expertise of about 4,000 coastal scientists, professionals, and managers from around the country. To locate appropriate reviewers, we combine this resource with online literature and curriculum vitae searches. Each proposal will be reviewed by experts in the scientific field relevant to the proposal and experts in the collaborative approach to science.

*Q: Which aspect of the project will be of most interest to the reviewers?*

Proposals will be reviewed using the funding program goals on page 3 of the Request for Proposals and Application Guide and the review criteria on pages 14 and 15.

*Q: If our Reserve received funding from CICEET (the Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology) last year, how will that affect our chances for Science Collaborative funding this year?*

Your CICEET project will have no impact on the competitiveness of proposals you submit to the Science Collaborative. Reviewers will have no bias related to applicants funded by CICEET.

*Thank you for your interest in this program. Please feel free to continue to ask questions throughout the development of your application!*